

STOP

THE

BLEEDING

Law enforcement's role in battling the destruction caused by identity theft

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Staggering debt, disillusioned security and depleted funds are only the tip of the iceberg for victims of identity theft. Identity theft is a crime that cripples its victims, not just financially, but also emotionally and mentally, as they struggle to put the pieces of their real selves back together.

Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in America with more than nine million victims each year, costing consumers billions of dollars — and never-ending grief. In Kentucky law, identity theft occurs when someone knowingly uses the identifying information of another person with the intent to represent that person for the purpose of depriving the individual of property or benefits or making some sort of financial gain, or to avoid detection. This can include using a person's name, address, telephone number, email address, social security number, driver's license number, birth date and more. And, the ways that identity thieves access this information are endless and constantly evolving.

"The notion of identity theft as someone stealing a social security number and starting an account is a very, very small piece of the whole picture — it's pretty complicated," said Hopkinsville Police Detective Burt Finley, who is one of six department detectives and specializes in computer crimes.

Identity theft to avoid detection is usually considered criminal identity theft. Criminal identity theft occurs when an imposter provides law enforcement another person's name and personal information during an investigation or upon arrest — either through a false driver's license or >>